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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

CU-02 DHA-02 EA-07 IO-13 /088 W

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R 302015Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9636

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 2235

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, TF

SUBJECT: THE PNM ELECTION MANIFESTO

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 2063

1. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, THE RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT HAS ADOPTED A PLATFORM - OR MANIFESTO - FOR NEXT MONTH'S GENERAL ELECTIONS MAIN THEMES OF WHICH ARE STABILITY, THE PROGRESS ATTAINED UNDER 20 YEARS OF PNM RULE, AND THE PARTY'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. THE PNM HAS CHOSEN TO RUN AN ISSUES-ORIENTED CAMPAIGN WHICH DISPARAGES THE MANY OPPOSITION PARTIES AS A "STOCK JOKE" AND WHICH IS CENTERED ON THE PERSONAL APPEAL AND REPUTATION OF PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS. THE MANIFESTO CONCENTRATES ON ESTABLISHING THE RECORD OF THE PNM AND IN EITHER DEMONSTRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR PLEDGING STRONG FUTURE PROGRAMS IN THE MAJOR AREAS OF PUBLIC CONCERN. IT CONTAINS NO STARTLING NEW DEPARTURES AND NO MORE THAN THE USUAL ELECTION-YEAR PROMISES. SOME OF THE MAJOR POINTS:

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2. NATIONAL OWNERSHIP - A CENTRAL ISSUE OF THE CAMPAIGN

WHICH HAS BEEN ADDRESSED AND ENDORSED IN GENERAL TERMS BY ALL PARTIES IS NATIONAL, AS OPPOSED TO FOREIGN, CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL RESOURCES. THE DEBATE IS OVER THE METHOD BY WHICH THIS CONTROL IS TO BE EXERCISED. THE PNM, HAVING BEEN ATTACKED FROM THE LEFT FOR ITS COOPERATION WITH MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND FROM THE RIGHT FOR THE DIRECT GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES, HAS CONTINUED ITS MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD POLICY. THE MANIFESTO STRESSES THE PARTY'S DEDICATION TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP. IT LISTS AS STEPS ALREADY TAKEN IN THIS DIRECTION: THE PURCHASE OF THE FORMER SHELL OIL PROPERTIES AND REFINERY, THE PURCHASE OF ALL THREE SUGAR COMPANIES, THE RECENT PURCHASE OF THE CEMENT COMPANY, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK AND THE NATIONAL FISHERIES COMPANY. IT POINTS WITH PRIDE TO THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE THE MAJORITY SHAREHOLDER IN ALL OF THE LARGE JOINT-VENTURE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDERWAY OR PLANNED FOR CENTRAL TRINIDAD. ON THE OTHER HAND IT PROMISES STRICT PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMPANIES AND RENEWS A LONG-STANDING PLEDGE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DIVEST ITSELF OF ITS SHARES IN ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND TO THE WORKERS IN THE INDUSTRIES.

3. CARIBBEAN AND FOREIGN RELATIONS - AS DESCRIBED IN THE MANIFESTO, THE MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE PNM ARE THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN, OPPOSITION TO COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID, AND SUPPORT FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER. IT PLEDGES THE PARTY'S DEDICATION FIRST TO THE CARIBBEAN 'INCLUDING CUBA' AND THEN TO THE THIRD WORLD. IT ALSO STATES THAT "EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO MAINTAIN THE CONTACTS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED WITH ASIA AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES." OF SPECIAL RELEVANCE TO U.S. INTERESTS, THE MANIFESTO STATES THAT THE POLICY OF THE PNM IS "ACTIVE OPPOSITION TO COLONIALISM IN ALL ITS SHAPES AND FORMS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CARIBBEAN, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE UNITED NATIONS DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE." NO MENTION, EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, IS MADE OF THE U.S. OR THE OTHER INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES.

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4. EDUCATION - THE MANIFESTO STRESSES THE RECORD OF THE GOVERNMENT IS GREATLY INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO ATTEND SCHOOL DURING THE 20 YEARS OF PNM RULE. IT OUTLINES THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM FOR IMPROVING AND ENLARGING THE SYSTEM INCLUDING A REORIENTATION TOWARD TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS. (THE PNM WAS EMBARRASSED, HOWEVER, WHEN IT WAS FORCED TO ANNOUNCE THAT 12 OF THE 13 NEW SCHOOLS WHICH WERE SCHEDULED TO OPEN THE WEEK BEFORE THE ELECTION

WILL NOT BE FINISHED ON TIME AND THAT DELAYED SCHOOL OPENINGS
WILL BE REQUIRED IN SOME CASES AND DOUBLE SHIFT SYSTEMS IN
OTHERS.)

5. PUBLIC INTEGRITY - THE PNM MANIFESTO PLEDGES THE PNM TO
ENACT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS WHICH WOULD COMPEL THE
PRIME MINISTER AND LEADERS OF OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES CON-
TESTING ELECTIONS TO DISCLOSE PUBLICLY THEIR ASSETS AND
LIABILITIES. MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, OTHER MEMBERS OF
PARLIAMENT AND SENIOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO
MAKE A SIMILAR DISCLOSURE TO THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION.
THE PNM WOULD ALSO ENACT AN AMENDMENT TO FORCE MEMBERS OF
PARLIAMENT WHO CROSS THE FLOOR TO RESIGN FROM THE HOUSE, THUS
ACCOMPLISHING WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS DONE ALREADY BY
SECURING UNDATED LETTERS OF RESIGNATION FROM ALL PNM CANDIDATES.

6. PUBLIC SERVICES - THE PNM IS REFRESHINGLY CANDID ABOUT
SOME OF THE SHORTCOMINGS OF ITS STEWARDSHIP. REFERENCES TO
THE FACT THAT "THE DETERIORATION AND INADEQUACY OF THE
(TELEPHONE) SERVICE HAVE REACHED ALARMING PROPORTIONS"
AND "THE UNSATISFACTORY METHODS AND INEFFICIENT PERFORMANCE
HITHERTO MANIFESTED" IN THE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM,
AND RECOGNITION THAT DEFICIENCIES IN THE WATER SERVICE
HAVE BECOME "THE NUMBER ONE NATIONAL PROBLEM OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO" ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT MAY BE THE PNM'S ACHILLES
HEEL--THE FAILURE TO KEEP UP WITH DEMAND FOR BASIC
INFRASTRUCTURE AND A GROWING SENSE OF FRUSTRATION FELT
BY MANY PEOPLE IN THEIR DAILY CONTACTS WITH THE RULING
GOVERNMENT.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

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R 302015Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9637

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 2235

7. COMMENT: AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, THE PNM HAS CHOSEN TO HIGHLIGHT ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PLANS IN ITS MANIFESTO AND TO MINIMIZE ITS FAILURES. IT HAS ALSO PLAYED UP TO THE PREVAILING NATIONALISTIC AND PRO-THIRD WORLD SENTIMENTS WHICH IT BELIEVES NOT HAVE A STRONG APPEAL TO THE VOTERS. IN ITS TREATMENT OF ISSUES WHICH ARE OF INTEREST AND CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES - ECONOMIC NATIONALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION - THE PNM HAS PLAYED DOWN BUT NOT REPUDIATED ITS POLICY OF PRAGMATIC COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN ITS ON-GOING PROGRAM OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ITS MODERATE STANCE WITHIN THE THIRD WORLD. WHILE THE PNM MANIFESTO MAY IGNORE THE BASICALLY GOOD RELATIONS WHICH PNM GOVERNMENTS HAVE MAINTAINED WITH THE U.S., CANADA, AND THE U.K. AS WELL AS THE STRONG AND PERVASIVE ROLE WHICH TRADE AND INVESTMENT FROM THESE COUNTRIES PLAYS IN THE TRINIDAD ECONOMY, IT DOES NOT INDICATE THAT THE PNM PLANS TO UNDERTAKE ANY BASIC CHANGES OR DRAMATIC DEPARTURES AS ELECTION GIMMICKS WHICH WOULD ALTER THESE RELATIONS. THE PASSAGE ON CLONIALISM IN THE CARIBBEAN, FOR EXAMPLE, DOES NOT PRESAGE SUPPORT FOR CUBA'S PUERTO RICO INITIATIVES IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UN, BUT IT IS AN INDICATION OF THE DEPTH OF TRINIDAD'S POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO DECOLONIZATION AND OF THE DIFFICULTY WHICH A PNM GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE IN ACTIVELY OPPOSING ANY ANTI-COLONIAL MEASURE IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24.

8. AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT OF THE PNM'S UNCOMPLIMENTARY WAY IN WHICH THE MANIFESTO AND ALSO PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS IN NUMEROUS SPEECHES CONTRAST THE RELATIVE PEACE, FREEDOM, AND STABILITY OF TRINIDAD WITH THE CONDITIONS PREVAILING IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND ELSEWHERE IN THE THIRD WORLD. IN TRINIDAD, ACCORDING TO THE PNM, "PEOPLE CAN WALK IN THE STREETS IN PEACE. DISSENT IS NEITHER PERSECUTED NOR PROSECUTED . . . OUR PRESS IS NOT MUZZLED. . . WE HAVE BEEN SPARED POLITICAL VIOLENCE. . . OUR CITIZENS HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO THE ENJOYMENT OF PROPERTY. OUR CHURCHES FACE NO DISABILITIES, ARE FREE TO PROPAGATE THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEF, (AND) ARE WELCOMED AS PARTNERS IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM, . . . TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO IS NOT A ONE-PARTY STATE." IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THIS CONTRAST MAY BE THE GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE 20 YEARS OF PNM RULE AND THE ARGUMENT WHICH WILL

PERSUADE THE VOTERS TO REJECT THE PROPSECT OF UNSETTLING
CHANGE PROMISED BY OPPOSITION PARTIES AND TO ACCEPT FIVE
MORE YEARS OF DR. WILLIAMS' BENEVOLENT GUIDANCE.
FAY

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